

1959

THE CHURCHES

AND THE

JAPANESE IN AMERICA

“UNDER the emotional strain of the moment, Americans will be tempted to express their resentment against the action of Japan’s government by recriminations against the Japanese people who are in our midst. We are gratified to observe that the agents of our government are dealing with them with consideration.

“Let us remember that many of these people are loyal patriotic American citizens and that others, though Japanese subjects, have been utterly opposed to their nation’s acts against our nation. It is incumbent upon us to demonstrate a discipline which, while carefully observing the precautions necessary to national safety, has no place for vindictiveness.

“We therefore call upon the church people of this country to maintain a Christian composure and charity in their dealings with the Japanese among us.”

LUTHER A. WEIGLE, *President*

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America

SUE E. WEDDELL, *President*

Foreign Missions Conference of North America

G. PITT BEERS, *President*

Home Missions Council of North America

December 10, 1941

COMMISSION ON ALIENS AND PRISONERS OF WAR

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PROCEDURES prescribed by federal authorities for the evacuation of Japanese from certain defined territories on the Pacific Coast have not been finally formulated and completed. However, it is important that a report should be given to the church people of the country concerning developments to date, especially in connection with the services of the churches, in order to assist them in facing the situation more intelligently and in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The date of publication of this pamphlet should be noted so that due consideration may be given to developments subsequent to that date.

The Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War was constituted jointly by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the Home Missions Council of North America, with the Foreign Missions Conference of North America cooperating. Canon Almon R. Pepper is Chairman and Dr. Roswell P. Barnes, Acting Secretary.

This pamphlet is published by the Commission for the information of the churches.

I. JAPANESE AMERICANS AND THE PRESENT CRISIS*

by

FLOYD W. SCHMOE

TRANSPLANT a hundred thousand men and women onto a strange shore, set them down amidst millions of people of another color, another language, and another religion, deny them the rights and privileges of citizenship and of economic and social equality, brand them by law as "undesirables" and discriminate against them; then let them discover that they will never again be able to return to their homeland because old ties have been broken and new ties have been formed; have them discover that their own children speak a foreign language, are of another nationality, and live by another standard of morality and ethics, let all this dawn slowly upon them and, even though they accept it as their fate, you have a situation pregnant with human drama. Now plunge the country of their ancestors and the country of their domicile into sudden, bitter, total war and you have more than drama—you have tragedy.

There are some three hundred thousand Americans of Japanese ancestry living in Hawaii and on the West Coast of the United States who now face this situation. More than sixty per cent of these are young Japanese Americans—citizens by virtue of birth and education. This second generation is now called upon to bear with their elders the burdens that inevitably fall upon the innocent bystanders of war. Vast as was the gulf between parents and children, family ties are so precious and filial loyalty so great that all the Japanese Americans, old and young, citizen and alien, stand together in this crisis a homogeneous group—stand like a clump of exotic trees whose interlocking branches are lashed by the storms of a hostile shore.

These American-born Japanese, these *nisei*, are in a strange category. They are American citizens; they are American reared, American trained, and American educated. America is their own, their native land; they have known no other; most of them will never know another. They sing American songs,

*Excerpts from an article appearing in the Spring, 1942, issue of *Christendom*.

dance American dances, eat American food, live in American homes, wear American clothes, read American papers, enjoy American movies, speak the English language with the American idiom and the American accent.

* * * *

The parent generation, the Japan-born or *issei*, are in a still more difficult position. Never accepted by the American community, denied citizenship and certain property rights, given little chance to learn the American language and American ways, they were forced in self-defense to withdraw within their own circles, to remain Japanese in culture and therefore in sympathy. Is it not quite natural and entirely proper that they should retain a warm feeling in their hearts for the beautiful "Eight Islands" of their birth, even though they had found living so hard there and the prospects for the future so questionable that they had been willing to break the home ties and migrate to a far and a strange land? In view of the conditions under which for the past twenty, thirty, or for some of them, forty years, they have lived in this "land of promise," this "free America," a great loyalty to our flag is hardly to be expected of them. Yet there is no doubt but that the majority are, even in this peculiar situation, entirely loyal, and that they are teaching their children to be true Americans. Of those who are not, most are willing to maintain a strict neutrality throughout the war, have already returned to Japan, or are now in the custody of the Department of Justice.

Although a very few had come to the Hawaiian Islands and the West Coast as early as the 1870s, large numbers did not arrive until later when after the discovery of gold in Alaska the western states experienced a boom unprecedented even in the days of "forty-nine." Wages were high in the saw-mills and canneries of the Northwest, in the construction camps along the railroads, with the fishing fleets, orchards and farms of the Southwest, and on the cane and pineapple plantations of Hawaii; and help was hard to find. Chinese and Japanese were imported in large numbers as contract laborers by the railroads and plantations, and they wrote home to their friends and relatives in the Orient. Thousands of ambitious young men sailed for America and the Hawaiian Islands.

Many of them found fulfillment of promise and, resolving to stay and grow up with the country, sent for their wives and fiancées; but the majority still hoped to work a few years, save a few thousand dollars and return to Japan to establish families and live as comparatively wealthy men. Each passing year saw some return and many come. After ten or even twenty years of hard labor thousands of the men realized that, although wages were high by any Oriental standard, living was also high and wealth did not accumulate at the hoped-for rate. The return to the homeland was therefore indefinitely postponed. But the men were growing older, and marriage, if there were to be ancestors for their children, could not be indefinitely postponed.

Since the Japanese are accustomed to "arranged marriages," it was not difficult to procure brides from the homeland, even by mail. Thus began the interesting "picture bride" arrangement, by which until as late as 1920 some thousands of Nipponese girls came to the West Coast as brides of the Japanese men already settled there. Girls marry young in Japan, so only young girls were available. Many were of teen age, their prospective husbands fifteen or twenty years their senior. Today, the *issei* men are above sixty years of age on the average, while the mothers of the second generation only about forty-five.

The homes that were established in America are often more Japanese than Japan itself, for Japan changed rapidly during the years of migration and the Japanese Americans, isolated in their own communities and camps, changed little at all. Not knowing the language and the strange ways of their American neighbors, and given little encouragement to mingle with them, they were inclined to keep close to the local community which was often barren of all cultural, educational, and recreational opportunity.

Although America denied them much, we were unable to deny them children. Very quickly and in typical Japanese profusion the *nisei* arrived to bridge the gap between the old and the new, the East and the West.

* * * *

Fortunately the children were American citizens because of their place of birth, and schools had to be provided for them. In the American school the young Japanese are happy. They

are not brilliant students as a group, but they are accustomed to hard work and they are conscientious. Because they work hard and are serious they make good grades. Year in and year out a much larger percentage of the valedictorians and salutatorians of West Coast high schools are *nisei* students than the total percentage of such students would ever indicate. Many also are leaders in student affairs, athletics, and other extracurricular activities. Since December 7th a *nisei* student was elected president of the student body of an Oregon high school. Last year in a Seattle high school a *nisei* girl held elective offices in seven different school organizations.

At institutions of higher learning Japanese American students are equally quick to take advantage of the opportunities offered them. Although they come from an economic level appreciably lower than that of the white American students, a much higher percentage of them attend the universities and colleges. At the University of Washington in Seattle, where some eight thousand students are enrolled from a community of approximately half a million people, there are nearly four hundred *nisei* students from a Japanese community of about ten thousand—a ratio of three to one. That the fraternities and sororities do not accept them causes them little worry; they are not ambitious socially; the democracy of the classroom and laboratory, the campus and the playing field, is sufficient. They are happy for the opportunity of preparing themselves for work which promises them a higher standard of living than that which their fathers found from truck gardens and fishing fleets.

Not until they have graduated from school and have plunged into the keen competition of the commercial world, do they realize that although they had been given equal opportunities of education and have made the best possible use of the opportunity, there is not in actual fact equal opportunity for them. The flag which they had so often and so proudly saluted does not in their case offer "freedom and justice to all."

But because of real ability and because of demonstrable characteristics of efficiency and dependability, thousands of *nisei* have made places for themselves in business and in the professions. Until recently more than one thousand held state civil service appointments. Capable Japanese lawyers, doctors,

dentists and optometrists are practicing in some twenty-five cities of the Pacific area. Every large educational institution on the West Coast and in Hawaii had Japanese professors and scientists on its staff. A few were employed by the Federal Government, and many were trusted executives of banks, transportation companies, and commercial firms. In Hawaii five members of the Territorial Legislature were Hawaiian Japanese.

Still they had not all deserted the farms and fishing fleets. Seventy-five per cent of the vegetables produced on the Pacific Coast still came from Japanese farms and gardens, and roughly three thousand Japanese were employed in, or supported by, the fishing industry of the San Pedro area alone.

As with all pictures, there were highlights and there were shadows. The United States had denied citizenship to the foreign-born Japanese, and certain states had imposed sharp restrictions upon property rights. The scattered Japanese American communities were poor in physical equipment and in cultural resources; their neighbors had denied them not only equal opportunity, but in many instances refused them the quota of ordinary human understanding and friendship due any decent, thrifty, law-abiding American neighbor.

We were suspicious of the language schools where their children went for an hour each evening after returning from the regular public school, to be taught filial piety, Japanese language, and the best of the old culture and customs, yet we did not offer them the recreational and cultural opportunities which our own children enjoyed. We criticized their tendency to stick together and to form Japanese communities, but we protested every attempt to "invade" our community in search of jobs, living quarters, or recreation. We feared they would lower our standard of living because they lived frugally and simply, but we gave them little chance even to witness the abundant life of the American home. I have had scores of Japanese American students in my home, college-age men and women, who were born in my own city and went to school with my own children, who have told me that this was the first time in their lives that they had ever been inside an American home. We deplored the fact that they sent savings back to Japan while we denied them opportunities to invest in American enterprise.

Still, as Dr. Romanzo Adams of the University of Hawaii has said, they were part of us. They were determined to remain with us. Their children were our children. They were ambitious, alert, intelligent. They were securing an American education. America meant opportunity to them and they were preparing to make full use of that opportunity. No mean success satisfied them. Their faces were definitely set toward the winning of a superior economic status. Many were ambitious for recognition in the fields of art, science and scholarship. They wanted to enter fully into the spiritual heritage of America and enrich it from their Oriental sources.

Would we allow them to do so? Would we meet them half way? Their problem was our problem, America's problem. They would become largely what we allowed them to become. Like the various other cultural groups already absorbed into our American scene, they could contribute much; or they could remain an unassimilated remnant, an irritant and a perpetual problem.

Then the worst happened. Fanned by fear and suspicion on both sides Mars' smouldering fires leaped into flame. Out of the peaceful Sabbath calm of December 7th the Japanese navy struck at Pearl Harbor. American forces struck back.

* * * *

All Japanese immediately became "Japs" to the scare-heads of the War Extras, and to nearly every American. All foreign-born Japanese became, along with those of Germany and Italy, "enemy aliens." Agents of the Department of Justice, with lists prepared in advance, struck quickly. Business and professional men did not return at night to their families. Children came home from school on Monday to find father or brother missing. . . .

Japanese were ordered off the streets, businesses were closed, credits were blocked, bank accounts were "frozen," fishing boats were tied-up, insurance on boats, cars and trucks, was cancelled; some cities called in all licenses issued to alien Japanese and refused to issue new ones. Thousands of office and market workers were thrown out of work. Japanese American students away at school were called back by their parents, but railways, buses, and boats refused to sell them tickets with-

out evidence of citizenship. A hurry-up call for birth certificates allowed most of them to return to their homes for Christmas vacation. Many did not return to school however. Rumors of worse things to come were flying fast, fear and uncertainty were ruling forces.

Since the closing of produce markets endangered the food supply of the entire West Coast adjustments were quickly made and many firms were allowed, under certain restrictions, to open their doors. Some of these found that business had already fallen off fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred per cent and so they closed again. Many have never opened at all.

There was another, more helpful, side to the picture. The attitude of Government officials almost without exception was courteous and considerate. Governors, university presidents, high church officials, and labor leaders broadcast appeals for calmness, consideration and fair play, and expressed confidence in the loyalty of the American Japanese.

The Japanese community tightened its collective belt. Welfare and relief agencies stood by in case of actual physical need, though few cases have so far been reported. Most of the Japanese understood the situation and said in so many words or in effect, "we can take it."

* * * *

Their past civil record has been admirable. The Japanese community is always among the first to subscribe their quotas for the Community Chest, the Red Cross, or war loans. No group has a more enviable police record. Delinquency is almost unknown. They are co-operating actively and generously in home defense and relief work. They are aiding the Government in every possible way. Some four thousand *nisei* boys are serving in the armed forces. . . .

But what of their future? Just now that is largely up to us. Even the Japanese who is an American citizen is in no position at the moment to take the initiative in his own behalf.

We must see that there is no actual physical suffering because of want, although that will be difficult, not because we are unwilling to help out, but because the typical Japanese will smilingly refuse charity to the very verge of starvation. We must see that they receive justice and fair play. If America is

not big enough in wartime to grant justice to the stranger within her gate, what, I ask, is she fighting this war for?

As soon as possible we must see that they again find a useful place in society. At the moment the agriculturalists of the coastal valleys are the most favorably situated. They are not in defense areas and they are producing vital food stuffs needed by the entire nation. So one of the solutions of the problem will no doubt be a "back to the soil movement" on the part of many Japanese. This should be encouraged. At the very best it is going to be painful, but the adjustments incident to a gradual and voluntary movement would be far less severe than those incident to an enforced mass exodus.

The Japanese Christians who make up a large percentage of the *nisei* group but a small percentage of the older group are faring best. In the first place the Christians are better adjusted to American life and in the second place they have a strong and sympathetic church group standing by them. Most important of all, they have an inner strength which comforts and sustains them. The Buddhist group which comprises the majority of the *issei* and a small percentage of the *nisei*, are on the whole less well integrated. They speak little English and are a more conservative group.

But Christian, Buddhist, or neither, they are still our fellow men, and just now they are *the* "certain man"; not fallen among robbers, but illy used and left lying by the Jericho road.

II. FACTS ABOUT THE PROBLEM*

A. HOW MANY JAPANESE ARE INVOLVED?

IN THE United States—not including Hawaii—there are approximately 127,000 Japanese. Of these 80,000 are citizens, having been born in this country, and 47,000 are "enemy aliens," having been born in Japan and therefore not eligible, under our laws, to naturalization. Many of these latter would

*The principal reference for facts in this section is the "Preliminary Report and Recommendations on Problems of Evacuation of Citizens and Aliens From Military Areas" by the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, House Report No. 1911, 77th Congress, 2d session, dated March 19, 1942. It will be called "Tolan Committee Report" in citing page references.

have become citizens if the law had permitted. Several thousands of their sons are in the armed forces of our country.

Most of the Japanese are on the west coast. In California, Oregon and Washington there are 112,000. Of these, 71,000 are American citizens and 41,000 are aliens. Approximately 15,000 are scattered throughout the rest of the country, about 2,000 being in New York City.

According to the estimates of Dr. Frank Herron Smith, Superintendent of the Pacific Japanese Provisional Conference of the Methodist Church, most of the women in the group of 47,000 aliens, are over 50 years of age. He estimates the average age of the men to be about 62. (Immigration was stopped by the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924.)

Of Japanese gainfully occupied in California, about 20,000 or 50 per cent, are engaged in agriculture. During the past year, according to the report of the Tolan Committee, 42 per cent of all truck crops grown in the state were produced by Japanese.

B. REGULATIONS CONCERNING "ENEMY ALIENS"

Japanese aliens, along with "enemy aliens" of other nationalities, have been required to turn in firearms, cameras, and shortwave radio sets, and to apply for alien identification certificates. (*Regulations Controlling Travel and Other Conduct of Aliens of Enemy Nationalities*, as issued by the Attorney General on February 5, 1942, may be obtained from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.) Their bank accounts have been "frozen" except that \$100 per month may be drawn for living expenses. Markets, restaurants, art shops and other businesses may be operated if a government license is granted; the incomes are deposited in special accounts from which operating expenses may be withdrawn. Many businesses thus re-opened have closed again because of lack of trade.

Hearing boards for those detained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation have been operation. Each Japanese may designate a friend to attend his hearing as a character witness, and character statements may be submitted to the board.

As precaution against possible espionage and sabotage Jap-

anese were evacuated from several designated areas of strategic importance. A few hundred were removed along with "enemy aliens" of other nationalities from especially vulnerable areas by February 15. By order of Attorney General Biddle, certain limited military areas in the three coast states were cleared of "enemy aliens" by February 24. These early evacuations affected less than 10,000 persons along the entire coast, most of them moving only short distances and finding refuge among relatives and friends. An assistance fund of \$500,000 was earmarked by the Federal Security Agency for relief of cases of hardship, but very few calls came for financial help.

The Tolan Committee emphasizes the pressure of "a considerable press demand . . . for evacuation of aliens, and especially of the Japanese from the west coast." The Committee reports, "One of the factors making for public antagonism toward persons of Japanese origin in the continental United States was the widespread reports in magazines and newspapers of instances of sabotage for which Japanese residents of Hawaii¹ were allegedly responsible on December 7."

On February 13th the Pacific coast Congressional delegation sent a letter² to President Roosevelt attaching certain recommendations. The following paragraph is taken from that letter:

"Eliminating the question of citizenship and basing our procedure upon the question of loyalty alone, we feel that an effective means of reaching our potential enemies can be attained. By utilizing the military authority of the Army to effect the partial or complete evacuation of strategic areas, to be de-

1. In this connection the following telegram from the Chief of Police of Honolulu, sent at the request of the Honorable Samuel W. King, Delegate representing the Territory of Hawaii in Congress is instructive:
"Hon. John Tolan

Chairman, Committee Investigating National Defense Migration
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

Pursuant request Delegate King advise you that there were no acts of sabotage committed in city and county of Honolulu December 7 nor have there been any acts of sabotage reported to police department since that date. Police department had charge of traffic on Pearl Harbor Road from Pearl Harbor to Honolulu shortly after bombing started with several officers on duty there. There was no deliberate blocking of the traffic during December 7 or following that date by unauthorized persons.

W. A. Gabrielson
Chief of Police, Honolulu"

2. Tolan Committee Report, p. 3.

terminated in size, scope, and location by the military authority, we feel that the Army or the Department of Justice may rightfully remove any or all persons whom they may select from such areas and prohibit their return. This might require the principles of martial law, it might inconvenience to greater or lesser extent many loyal and patriotic citizens, but we feel the critical nature of the situation and its patent subversive potentialities are so compelling as to justify the taking of extreme and drastic measures."

The recommendations accompanying the above letter were as follows:

"We recommend the immediate evacuation of all persons of Japanese lineage and all others, aliens and citizens alike, whose presence shall be deemed dangerous or inimical to the defense of the United States, from all strategic areas.

"In defining said strategic areas we recommend that such areas include all military installations, war industries, water and power-plant installations, oil fields and refineries, transportation and other essential facilities, as well as adequate protective areas adjacent thereto.

"We further recommend that such areas be enlarged as expeditiously as possible until they shall encompass the entire strategic area of the States of California, Oregon, and Washington, and the Territory of Alaska.

"We make these recommendations in order that no citizen, located in a strategic area, may cloak his disloyal or subversive activity under the mantle of his citizenship alone and further to guarantee protection to all loyal persons, alien and citizen alike, whose safety may be endangered by some wanton act of sabotage."¹

According to the Report of the Tolan Committee, "These recommendations eventuated in the President's Executive order of February 19." That order was in part as follows:

"I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War, and the military commanders whom he may from time to time designate, whenever he or any designated commander deems such action necessary or desirable, to prescribe military areas in such

1. Tolan Committee Report, pp. 3-4.

places and of such extent as he or the appropriate military commander may determine, from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate military commander may impose in his discretion."

Under this Order the Secretary of War assigned responsibility for directing the more extensive evacuation to Lieutenant General John L. De Witt, Western Defense Commander, General De Witt on March 2nd designated an area embracing roughly the western half of California, Oregon and Washington as the territory from which persons of Japanese ancestry, whether aliens or citizens, should be moved. Presumably German and Italian aliens are also involved, but Japanese are being given first attention.

Voluntary evacuation was permitted through March 29th, at which time an order of General De Witt went into effect "freezing" Japanese residents in the Military Area, pending further evacuation under military direction.

In order to protect the Japanese against exploitation by unscrupulous persons the Federal Reserve Bank was designated to act as custodian of their assets and to aid in the arranging of their affairs. The Bank, along with other agencies operating under the Wartime Civil Control Administration, established 64 offices in the Military Area to assist the evacuees. The announcement of this service was issued on March 11.

The War Relocation Authority, headed by Milton Eisenhower, has been created to supervise the settlement of large groups of evacuees. Some of these will be reception centers for those who may later be located elsewhere; others will probably be more permanent, at least for the duration of the war. The Owens Valley development is described on page 22.

As of March 30, it is reported that temporary living quarters for 37,000 evacuees have been set up at such places as fair grounds and race tracks by the Wartime Civil Control Administration. Such places will serve only as temporary reception centers.

III. ASSISTANCE RENDERED BY CHURCHES

A. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

IN addition to the statement appearing on the cover of this pamphlet, which was carried widely by the press and broadcast over a national radio network, many appeals for fairness were issued promptly by local church groups, notably on the Pacific Coast. The following statements are characteristic in spirit and content:

1. From the Seattle Council of Churches and Christian Education, December 8, 1942: . . . "Particularly now with the tension rising between the two nations, the United States of America and Japan, we urge our people to remain calm and not be carried away in a wave of hysteria. Sane thinking and a sober, prayerful attitude now will save us from making regrettable mistakes and creating undue tension and misunderstanding.

"It would be most unfortunate if our Christian people would, by their attitude and actions, add to the difficulties and trials of the Japanese-Americans who now become victims of unfortunate circumstances because of the present situation. Most of the Japanese in this country have in time past demonstrated their loyalty to our country and to the American way of life, and before we carelessly class all Japanese as enemies we should remember that many of them were born here; have gone to our schools; assumed the responsibilities of American citizens, and are no less a part of these United States than are the rest of us.

"We urge that as long as the Japanese people within our borders remain loyal to our country, we shall not be guilty of discriminating against them in our community life, and particularly in holding of jobs, and in enjoying the privileges of this country.

"In this crisis we would remind all that this is no hour to forget the traditions and principles of our great nation, to remain Christian in all of our attitudes and actions and not yield to hatred, and finally to seek Divine guidance for ourselves and our nation in this dark world."

2. From the Santa Maria, California, Ministers, February 4, 1942:

"With the expressed determination of Attorney General Biddle to use the facilities of his department to protect America against espionage, sabotage, and fifth column activities every good American will find himself in complete accord. We, ministers of the gospel in Santa Maria, California, believe that particular attention should be given to his warning against persecution, 'economic and social', of citizens stemming from present enemy races or nationalities. The Attorney General has well pointed out that attitudes and conduct characteristic of persecution are 'a two edged sword . . . which can easily drive people now loyal to us into fifth column activities,'

"Therefore, as Christian citizens, concerned with building a social and political order based on justice and righteousness, we would call attention to considerations which we believe will make for the highest patriotism of a democracy, rather than tending to destroy that in which we profess to believe by using the very totalitarian methods which we have decried.

"1. Alien residents should be given every consideration possible within the limits of public safety as defined by the Department of Justice, rather than by local or unofficial groups. . . .

"2. Americans should carefully distinguish between actual danger from enemy aliens and the use which selfish business interests are making of war psychology in an attempt to free themselves from embarrassing competition. . . .

"3. All suggestions looking toward indiscriminate herding of aliens or alien descendents into concentration camps should be rejected by good Americans, concerned with the future of their country. Such Nazi methods will be destructive of love of country in those directly and indirectly affected and will involve a dislocation of our agricultural life that seriously and needlessly injures all of us. . . .

"4. Now is not too soon to prepare for the days of peace. Every bit of fair play, good will and loyalty that can be preserved will become foundation stones of a more desirable world order. . . .

"5. We again affirm our conviction that Christian attitudes are at once the highest patriotism and the surest and quickest steps toward rebuilding our torn world. We call upon our fellow citizens to avoid hysteria, persecution, and denunciation. The Department of Justice is quite capable of determining policies based on facts, and of executing them. For our part, this hour calls for patience, humility, tolerance, spiritual poise, prayer, silence, and obedience to the rule, 'Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you'."

B. IMMEDIATE PRACTICAL AID

Beginning on the evening of December 7 the leaders of the Caucasian churches began to call upon their Japanese fellow-Christians, especially the pastors of the Churches, and to offer them practical assistance. In some instances pastors visited all the Japanese churches before going to bed that Sunday evening. Families of men detained by federal agents were befriended. In cases where the Japanese themselves could not promptly obtain funds for the purchase of food, money was loaned or food provided. Employers of Japanese were urged to continue the employment of those whose loyalty was not questioned.

The kind of practical service which was provided by the Churches is indicated by the following excerpts from letters:

"One practical step we are taking is to look for employment for those who are being evacuated. . . . The housing problem for those who have to move will be difficult and we may be able to help in finding them homes."

"All the Christians in and around Los Angeles have been trying to help their friends who had to move out by midnight tonight, and places have been found for most of them."

"Rev.———, the Japan-born pastor of the church at———, is already on his way to North Dakota. He has two motherless daughters who must be cared for in some way."

"Tomorrow our West Los Angeles church will give a supper to some 15 Japanese-American soldiers who are guarding the Old Soldiers' Home at Sawtelle. In that group are two Chinese-Americans who have also accepted their invitation to the supper."

"The Church has risen to the situation at Terminal Island. Many from the Japanese Church and others gave the use of their trucks and themselves to help families get out. They had but 48 hours' notice and it had to be done in a hurry."

C. ASSISTANCE TO JAPANESE CHURCHES

In most cases where the alien pastors of churches were apprehended by federal agents, Caucasian pastors conducted services of worship for their people. In some instances Japanese congregations were invited to worship in other churches. At a few points where it was feared that disorder might result from the appearance of many Japanese on the streets in the evening, worship services were conducted for them in homes in the Japanese neighborhood.

Foreign mission boards of several denominations assigned missionaries returned from Japan to assist the Japanese churches in the conduct of their regular work and in the provision of practical relief.

D. TOLAN COMMITTEE HEARINGS

In compliance with the request of the Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War, Dr. Frank Herron Smith arranged to have representatives of the churches appear before the hearings conducted on the Coast by the Tolán Congressional Committee. In San Francisco, Dr. Paul Reagor, President of the California Council of Churches, Rev. Gordon Chapman, representing the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Galen Fisher, of the Institute of Pacific Relations, and Will James, of the American Friends Service Committee, appeared and were given ample time to make their statements before the Committee. They declared that it was their belief that 90% of the first generation Christian Japanese were loyal to America and practically 100% of the Christian second generation Japanese young people. They suggested that, so far as our national security permits, the Japanese communities should not be disrupted in whatever removals of Japanese residing in or near vital military areas might take place. At the Los Angeles hearings Dr. Heckelman made the principal statement in behalf of the committee. He was supported by Bishop

James C. Baker of the Methodist Church and Dr. E. C. Farnham of the Los Angeles Church Federation, who answered questions. At Seattle Dr. Harold Jensen appeared as the representative of the Council of Churches. The representatives of the churches report a courteous hearing in each case.

E. RELATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Representatives of the Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War conferred with officials of the government in Washington, including the Attorney General and the Director of the Federal Security Agency and with others in the latter office. In addition to these conferences the Commission corresponded with the headquarters of the agencies involved and its representatives on the Pacific Coast were in frequent conference with General De Witt and his assistants, with Mr. Richard H. Neustadt, the Regional Director of the Federal Security Agency, and with Thomas C. Clark, Coordinator of Enemy Alien Control.

Through such conferences and correspondence the churches encouraged the government agents in their policy of sympathy and consideration and offered the resources of the churches during the process of evacuation and in resettlement areas urging especially the use of the personnel of the churches who had had long experience in work among the Japanese.

F. VISITATION TO INTERNEES.

Representatives of the churches have visited aliens who have been interned at Fort Missoula in Montana, Fort Lincoln in North Dakota and Ellis Island, New York. Services of worship have been conducted, materials for the sacrament supplied for use by interned pastors and hymn books and Bibles provided. Packages of books were sent from a number of cities including Spokane, Seattle, and Portland. Dr. Smith reports that he preached at a Sunday service at Fort Missoula to 350-400 men. "Never have I had closer attention nor a more appreciative congregation," writes Dr. Smith.

The Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War has filed with the War Department a request for permission to provide a regular chaplaincy service for those interned aliens who

are under the jurisdiction of the War Department, such service to be under the supervision of the Ecumenical Commission for Chaplaincy Service to Prisoners of War with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

G. STUDENTS.

Various groups interested in providing assistance to worthy Japanese students are coordinating their efforts. A conference of representative leaders on the Pacific Coast, drawn from Churches and Christian Associations and other agencies, held a two-day conference at Berkeley, March 21-22, 1942. Relief funds and other aid will be provided under reliable direction. Correspondence should be directed to the Pacific Coast Emergency Committee on Japanese Student Resettlement, 715 South Hope Street, Los Angeles, Calif., or to the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students, 347 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.

H. RESETTLEMENT OF FAMILIES OR SMALL GROUPS

The Executive Committee on Service to Evacuees, which includes executives of denominational Home Missions boards responsible for the supervision of aided Japanese churches, and which represents the Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War on the west coast, requested the assistance of Churches in placing Japanese evacuees east of the Sierras. In explanation of this request, the Committee reported as follows:

"There are only a few areas where somewhat self-sufficient colonies can be established. To keep so large a number of skilled and industrious people in camps doing work of no vital importance is a serious waste at a time when every ounce of man-power should be harnessed. Furthermore it would have a demoralizing effect on the Japanese themselves, and undermine the loyalty of the citizens, who, almost without exception, are eager to demonstrate their devotion to democratic ideals and the defeat of Japan.

"The government strongly approves the voluntary resettling of Japanese in comparatively small groups, and would warmly welcome the systematic aid of all kinds of private organizations in making this possible. Here arises a unique opportunity

for the leadership of the National Protestant bodies and for the cooperation of local churches, Christian associations and individuals.”

The Committee called upon local churches to do two things:

“1. Find openings for a few Japanese individuals or families to work as farmers, dairymen, horticulturalists, poultry raisers, chauffeurs, gardeners, domestic servants, cleaners, launderers, clerks, stenographers, nurserymen, or shop-keepers. Many are competent to be principals or assistants in optometry, dentistry, medicine, nursing, teaching or laboratory work.

“2. Secure the appointment of local committees who would assume a friendly attitude toward the incoming Japanese and help to integrate them into church and community life. Since all the newcomers would be Christians or friendly to Christianity, this task would not be difficult.”

The Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches adopted the following resolution on March 13, 1942:

“Resolved: That the Executive Committee authorize an appeal to the pastors of Protestant churches throughout those areas in the West not affected by the present evacuation order, to discover through their congregations whether employment can be provided on farms and in homes and in other occupations for American citizens of Japanese ancestry who by government order are being removed from designated areas along the Pacific coast; it being understood that the churches in areas now being evacuated will undertake to interview and recommend suitable persons for such positions as may be opened.”

The selection of Japanese to fill the openings offered by the above process will be undertaken by the committees already set up on the Pacific Coast to act on behalf of the Commission on Aliens and Prisoners of War. The central coordinating committee includes representatives of all denominations having work among Japanese. Notice of available employment should be sent to Rev. Frank Herron Smith, 2816 Hillegass Avenue, Berkeley, California, along with the following information: precise description of the work to be done; probable duration

of employment; wages and other compensation; name and address of employer, his occupation and religious affiliation; size of family in case of domestic service; and name and address of the chairman of the local sponsoring committee.

One of the most important duties of the sponsoring committee will be to make certain that the coming of a small number of Japanese into the community will not be strongly opposed by any considerable body of citizens.

IV. A VISIT TO OWENS VALLEY*

TWO hundred and twenty miles northeast from Los Angeles lies Owens Valley. The road runs straight as a die across the Mojave Desert, then through a narrow, rocky entrance into the Valley, which at its lower end is little different from the desert. The upper valley is from five to fifteen miles wide. To the west is a range of mountains 14,000 feet high and covered with snow, Mount Whitney towering above the other lordly peaks. To the east is another range 11,000 feet high. As late as the 1880's this valley was the scene of Indian massacres. Some 10 years ago Los Angeles completed the purchase of the greater share of the land on either side of the Owens River as a source of her water supply, and a great aqueduct runs from the valley over and through the mountains, carrying the water of life to the great metropolis. In the upper valley are three small and neat cities, Lone Pine, Independence, and Bishop. In Independence Pastor Howard Preston tells me that practically every working citizen is a salaried employee of the City of Los Angeles.

On March 23rd the inhabitants of this sequestered valley witnessed a sight the like of which they had never dreamed about. Toward five in the afternoon came a great cavalcade of cars and trucks, few of them very good or new, herded by a covey of "jeeps" in and around and among them like shepherd dogs, all led and directed by Army officers. The passengers in the cars and the drivers were little brown men, with a sprinkling of girls, voluntary Japanese evacuees from Los Angeles metropolitan area. Eight hundred of them had started

*Condensed from a report from Dr. Frank Herron Smith dated March 25, 1942.

in the early morning from the famous Rose Bowl of Pasadena. The inhabitants of Lone Pine, the first of the Valley cities, looked on wonderingly and many were surprised to find themselves smiling back at friendly faces and replying to friendly hand-waves from the unexpected and unwelcome visitors. At dusk a long train of coaches came in with another 500 who had no cars. All were carrying bundles of bedding and clothing. A big Major was looking on and occasionally lending a hand to a little fellow who seemed to have too heavy a load. A fleet of buses soon transferred this second group the 10 miles from Lone Pine to the "Reception Center." California has witnessed the entrance of many types of immigrants, the coming of the Mexicans and "Okies," but this was the strangest hegira of all.

Gen. DeWitt has ordered the removal of all aliens from proximity to the coast. Since the greatest danger is from Japan, the Japanese are the first who have to go. To lessen the hardships involved in such a great movement the Army is allowing just now voluntary evacuation.¹ Because of the war situation Terminal Island was ordered completely evacuated three weeks ago. As many of these people could not resettle in Southern California they are glad to go at once to a government camp. Other Japanese have lost their employment or business and are ready to go. We are advising our church people who have lost their means of livelihood to close up their affairs and accept the hospitality of the government. This first group is supposed to be composed only of people who can work. They are to be paid from \$50 to \$95 a month for their services, from which \$15 will be subtracted for food. The work will comprise truck-gardening, clearing land, cleaning, cooking, laundry, stenography, nursing, doctoring, etc., all that has to do with the maintenance and care of 10,000 people. "Sensitive spots" like Bainbridge Island² have already received orders to evacuate, and such groups will soon be transported to this or other "Reception Centers." Santa Anita Race Track is now being fitted out as such a place.

1. Editorial note: Voluntary Evacuation ceased on March 29 under an order "freezing" the residence of Japanese in the designated military area pending evacuation. See page 14.

2. Editorial note: The Japanese from Bainbridge Island were evacuated on March 30th.

Mr. Trigg and Mr. Pulliam in charge of Owens Valley have had long experience in W.P.A. projects and are trained engineers.

Yesterday morning as we drove back from Independence to the Center we could see from a mile away the cloud of dust over the place such as you often see over a flock of sheep in the desert. The buildings were begun only on March 16th, ten days ago. Already fifty are completed. In all, this Center will comprise 490 buildings, including a 150-bed hospital, administration building, mess halls and recreation center. It resembles a glorified C.C.C. Camp. The barracks are 100 feet long and 20 feet wide. A barrack building can be divided into four family flats. A post-office, school and canteen will be provided. No liquor will be sold nor will inmates be allowed to leave the grounds, which are guarded by soldiers. The general plan is that from these Reception Centers the Japanese will be sent as individuals or groups to resettlement projects farther east or to places where they can make a living during the war period.

The Protestant forces are compactly organized in their effort to serve the evacuees. We have offered the services of our 80 well-trained Japanese pastors and the evacuated missionaries available for religious leadership, education, recreation, social and athletic activities. On Palm Sunday Dr. F. H. Smith and Rev. H. Hashimoto will have charge of the services at Owens Valley. On Easter, Rev. Gordon Chapman and Dr. J. Kawamorita, President of the Japanese Church Federation of Northern California, will preach. On April 12th Rev. Joseph Hunter and a Los Angeles Japanese pastor will take charge. Mr. Kidwell in charge of the Social Service is very cooperative. Of course we shall soon have Japanese workers resident in the Camp.

Rev. Harold Preston, pastor at Lone Pine and Independence, is actively serving the great influx of white builders, contractors, managers and soldier guards who have transformed the erstwhile quiet valley into a veritable beehive of activity.

FRANK HERRON SMITH, March 25, 1942